Chapter 9
Values Education in Primary Schools in Germany:
The Example of North Rhine-Westphalia

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ABSTRACT

Values education is carried out in many countries with different names and systems. Although differences are observed according to the social, political, religious, and economic structure of each country, value education aims to provide an ideal structure for the individual and society by transferring cultural, moral, national, and universal values to individuals. In this study, values education in Germany, one of the important countries of Europe, was examined, and the situation of values education applied in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia was revealed as well as general values education in Germany. In Germany, values education is mainly given in Ethics and Religion courses. The data in the research were obtained by using the literature review technique, one of the qualitative research methods. As a result of the research, it has been understood that the values education in the Values and Norms course in primary schools in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia is not given at a sufficient level, and this course is only a specific course.

INTRODUCTION

Children learn values from their families and peers, social media, playgroups, the local community, and other institutions early in life. There is evidence that children probably develop a sense of morality during the first two years of their lives (Kagan & Lamb, 1987; Buzelli, 1992), which is closely linked to their emotional and social development (Dunn, 1988; Kuebli, 1994).

Therefore, children come to school with different values from their preschool experiences. The role of the school is twofold: to build on and complement the values that children are already beginning to develop by offering more significant exposure to a set of values that prevail in society (such as equality

of opportunity and respect for diversity); and helping children reflect on, make sense of and apply their own evolving values. The first of these tasks has received increasing official attention in the UK since the Education Act 1988 through discussion papers (OFSTED, 1994a; School Curriculum and Assessment Agency, 1995) and the shared values statement produced by the National Forum. On Values in Education and Society (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, 1996b; cf. Smith & Standish,1997.)

In 2014, UNICEF Monitoring Values for Children asked, "Who best teaches children values." The results show that children rank third after parents and grandparents, well ahead of teachers, friends, the media, or social networks (UNICEF, 2014). This result is due to the increasing importance of teachers in imparting values education: While only 50 percent of children found teachers necessary for their values in 2006, this figure was 80 percent in 2014. Thus, from the children's point of view, teachers showed that they attach importance to the transfer of values more clearly than in previous years. In addition to the increasing importance of teachers in forming values from the student's point of view, values become more important against the background of social changes with issues such as digitalization, globalization, and migration (Mandl, 2016). In particular, the issue of migration has become more critical in the context of school in recent years, and with it, in the study of values from different religions and cultures.

METHOD

In this study, the qualitative research method was used. In order to obtain data in the research, curricula of various courses within the scope of value education in Germany were examined using the literature review technique within the scope of the qualitative research method. The document analysis technique is the third basic data collection technique used in qualitative research (Merriam, 2013). It is a technique for obtaining, systematically examining, and evaluating official or unofficial records (Ekiz, 2003). All articles, books, statistics, and biographies related to the subject to be researched can be examined with this technique (Türkbal, 2003). In addition, document analysis in educational research can be a data source in the examination of textbooks and curriculum documents (as cited in Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). Literature search technique; It consists of the stages of reaching the documents, checking whether the documents are original, and analyzing the data obtained by understanding the documents. The curricula of "Ethics" and "Religion" courses, in which values education is predominantly given in Germany, were first examined, and the values included in these curricula were tabulated based on education and state.

LITERATUR REVIEW

The Importance of Values Education

Values education has become an educational phenomenon that has become increasingly important in recent years.

Values transferred to individuals in different forms and methods, which have become increasingly important in today's societies, have been seen as a problem in the historical process, and criticism has been brought about. These criticisms continue today. (Aslanargun, 2007). It is an area increasingly taking place in education programs and policies in many countries.

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